



## GEORGE QUARLES

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### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What are some of the regular rhythms that are returning as you wrap up the holiday season? How easy is it to see God working through these rhythms?
2. How does this story of God working through average people resonate with you? Does this confirm or push against who you think God invites to impact others?
3. Take a moment to invite God into all the 'ordinary' that will happen in your life this year. Open yourself to being used in unexpected ways and places. Receive the gift of the Spirit that is given to you through Jesus.

The week after Christmas can feel a bit like a liminal space in the year. The magic in the air from Christmas trees, lights, presents, parades, time with friends and family begins to give way to a sense of normalcy and a return to the regular rhythms of our lives. A layer of enchantment lifts, and we reenter the ordinary.

When we peel back the enchanted layer on the story of Jesus' dedication at the temple in Luke chapter 2, we meet a group of rather regular and relatable characters:

- An elderly widow whose marriage had been cut tragically short, caught in her rhythm of communal gathering and worship
- A man earnestly hoping for rescue and relief during a period of religious and political turmoil, feeling moved that day to go to the temple
- A young couple in a new city with very little money going through the motions of culture and society as best as they can

God moved in their lives through the Holy Spirit, and their ordinary agendas turned into astonishing purposes. The widow's eyes opened to see the miracle of the infant Jesus there, and she preached hope to a crowd gathered at the temple as the prophetess, Anna. The man we know as Simeon was moved by God to declare joyfully that his rescue for the whole world had come. The couple, Mary and Joseph, entered a Spirit-filled state of wonder and astonishment amidst the ordinary motions of their life that day. The infant was in fact the Messiah – God become man, and the hope for all mankind.

We all as followers of Jesus are similarly imbued with God's presence and movement. God has given us his Holy Spirit without reservation. We as a group of otherwise unremarkable people together participate in God's greater purposes, both in our lives and for the world. As you reenter normalcy and the regular rhythms of the new year, I encourage you to invite God and his activity into the ordinary places of your life and church community. It is through such moments that God works wonders beyond our imagining.

 BETHANY'S HOLIDAY PLAYLIST

Join us this Advent season for weekly devotional content!

